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法會圓滿成結界壇中伏惡神靈際理地
The Shurangama Dharma Assembly is perfect and complete. Within the platform of the sacred boundary, Buddhism will flourish.
It is the ultimate power of the essential ground of Reality. When there are protectors who cultivate, Buddhism will flourish.
Within the platform of the sacred boundary, all evil spirits are subdued. It is the ultimate power of the essential ground of Reality.

槃曇迦嚧彌五三

Pan

Tan

Jia

Lu

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讀經方法

How to Recite Sutras to Gain Samadhi and Wisdom

摘自印光大師文鈔

鍾佰晟 英譯

From the Collected Works of Master Yin Guang

English Translated by Brian Chung

念佛需要一字一句清清楚楚，不假思索；讀經也是同樣的道理，不要一邊看一邊琢磨意思，這樣益處不大，妄想情見倒增長很多。古大德抄寫《法華經》專心一意，只顧寫經，全然忘記了周圍的一切，天已經黑了還抄個不停，侍者過來好奇地問：「先生，天已經黑透了，您怎麼還能寫經啊？」他聽了，眼前立刻漆黑一片，什麼也看不見了。其實所謂光明與黑暗的區別，都是眾生的妄見和凡情。當他專心寫經時，妄想分別停止，一切執著統統放下，完全不分別天已經黑了，也不計較天黑了就會沒有光，沒有光就不能寫字。等到被人一提醒，什麼光明黑暗，頓時分別心起，一下子就看不見了。

修行用功的關鍵在於專心，不去用情想分別。倘若不用妄想，哪裡還有邪見？邪見沒有，就是正智。這樣讀經，和參禪看話頭、持咒念佛，是同一個道理，也就是專心致志。專心用功的時間長了，總有一天會豁然開朗。明代雪嶠圓信禪師，目不識丁，中年出家，刻苦參究，忍人所不能忍，行人所不能行，久而久之終於大徹大悟，隨口說出的話，無不妙契禪

When reciting the name of Amitabha, we must recite each word clearly and with an empty mind. The same is true when we recite Sutras. We must not ponder the meaning when reciting or reading Sutras as doing so will merely increase our biases and wandering thoughts, bringing little benefit. In the past, when an esteemed practitioner was copying the *Lotus Sutra*, he did so with singular focus, concentrating only on the act of transcribing, and ignoring everything else — not even noticing that night had fallen. When an attendant passed by and asked how he could possibly continue copying in the darkness, he suddenly saw that the entire room had become pitch black. Thus, the difference between light and dark is created by the emotional attachments and false thoughts of sentient beings. When the cultivator single-mindedly copied the Sutra, his wandering and discriminatory thoughts ceased, and so did his attachments, thus, he was unimpeded by the darkness. Only when reminded of the darkness did his thoughts of duality arise once more, and the phenomena of darkness was again able to impede his sight.

The key factor in cultivation is our focus and concentration, our ability to set aside our feelings, pondering and thinking. Moreover, after we have ceased our wandering thoughts, where are false views? Once false views are removed, proper wisdom finally arises. To read the sutras in such a manner (single-minded focus) is the same as practicing Chan Koans or mindfully reciting

機。你看他不識字又不能寫，修行時間長了居然也能讀書寫字。這種利益，都是從不起分別中來。讀經就應當這樣，這是老語錄老規矩了，已編入清朝龍藏。

讀經要從頭到尾一直讀下去，無論文字意思，一概不用分別心。能這樣讀經，上根之人，便能悟我空法空，證實相法；根機差的，也能消除業障，增長福慧。

六祖所謂「但看金剛經，即能明心見性。」指的就是這種讀經方法，所以叫作「但（看）」。

。能這樣看，一切大乘經典，都可以使人明心見性；假如邊看邊思考分別，這一句什麼意思，那一段說的什麼，那都是用凡情妄想，胡亂測度，無法暗合道妙，領悟佛經的宗旨，更談不上消除業障、增長福慧。

如果要研究經文義理，或翻閱註疏，應當另外安排一個時間專門研究。學佛人在沒有開智慧前，還是以閱經為主，略帶研究就好。否則只顧研究，哪怕研究到感覺如同撥雲見月，開門見山一樣，仍然只是文字知見，對自己的生死大事一點用都沒有，大限到來，平時研究經典的見解，此時完全派不上用場。如果不照以上所說的方法讀經，只怕宿世的業力引起種種邪見，此人反而撥無因果，殺盜淫妄種種煩惱相繼而興，如火熾然。他還以為自己是大乘行人，一切無礙，援引六祖說的「心平何勞持戒」的名言，狂妄地認為一切戒律，破而不破才是真持戒，如此修行，難以得到真正的受用。

應當以念佛為主，閱經為助。

Buddha-names and mantras.

Once we persistently practice with single-minded concentration, there will be a day when we suddenly uncover great wisdom. The Ming era Chan Master Xue Jiao Yuan Xin was illiterate and unlearned. Leaving the home life during his middle years, he not only toiled in great difficulty, but also bore what others could not and cultivated what others found too hard. Eventually, he achieved Bodhi, and his every word embodied wondrous esoteric wisdom. Originally, he could neither read nor write, but after cultivating for a long time, literacy suddenly arose in him. Such benefits are unlocked by the ceasing of false and discriminatory thinking. When we recite the sutras, we ought to do so in such a manner, which is the rule, as recorded in the Qing Dynasty's Official Buddhist Canon (the Dragon Tripitaka).

When reciting the Sutras, we ought to read it from start to finish, refrain from pondering the meaning of the words and phrases, and maintain complete neutrality of heart. If we could recite in such a manner, the more able among us can realize the emptiness of both the self and all dharmas, gaining the truth that penetrates illusions. The less able among us can have their past evil karmas eradicated, and have their blessings and wisdom increased. When the Sixth Patriarch said, "By looking at the Diamond Sutra, one can rediscover the self nature," he was referring to reading Sutras in such a manner. Thus, if we could look in such a way, all of the Mahayana Sutras can spark enlightenment within us. If, however, we read and ponder at the same time, thinking over the meaning of each phrase, then that is to use mundane emotions and wandering thoughts to randomly speculate. By doing so, we fail to concur with the wondrous nature of the Way and realize the true purpose of Buddhist Sutras. Neither could we eradicate karmic obstacles and increase our merit and wisdom.

If we wish to study the principles of the Sutras, and or to look over annotations, then we should set aside study time to do so. Before we have opened our innate wisdom, we should focus on mindfully reading the Sutras, and do only a little research. If we focus only on research, even though we feel we can "dispel the clouds and see the moon" coming straight to the point, it's mere intellectual understanding that is useless in helping us transcend birth and death. If we do not recite Sutras in accordance with the aforementioned instructions, we risk allowing our past life karmas to lead us astray, causing us to deny cause and effect, and sink into the fiery habits of lust, killing, lying and stealing. Foolishly believing that we are cultivators of the great vichecle (Mahayana), unimpeded, and perhaps daring to misuse the Six Patriach's saying, "A calm heart need not toil in keeping the precepts," to believe that breaking the precepts is akin to keeping them. Such cultivation is useless. We ought to recite the

大乘經典如法華、楞嚴、華嚴、涅槃、金剛、圓覺，可以專門讀誦一經，也可以這幾部經輪流讀誦。

聽了這段開示，周孟由居士提問說：所謂不起分別，無論文字義理，一概不加理會，是否只要竭誠恭敬，將每個字認對，音讀準，像老太婆念經那樣？弟子以前總有顧慮，總覺得按照這樣不分別、不理會意思的方法讀經，恐怕難有心得，不能生起法喜。我每次讀《阿彌陀經》、《普賢行願品》，都是口裡誦念經文，心中繫想極樂莊嚴、普賢慈悲，胸中法喜充滿。然而又擔心這樣讀法是否落入凡情妄想、思維計量中？大師回答說，對於那些文字義理一目了然的經文，不妨就讓自己讀得清楚了義，只要不特地動念頭思考就可以了，不是說讀經時明明懂意思也不行。

周孟由居士想起件事：「我曾見過一位師父，也識字但不解經文的意思，持誦《法華經》時，歡喜的表情溢於言表。由此可見，能不能生起法喜，與懂不懂意思沒有直接的關係，真能懷著恭敬慈悲的心，不起分別，一直讀下去，自然獲得實際利益，增長法喜。」周孟由表示自己今後也要這樣讀經，回向菩提。大師又告訴他：古人還注重聽經，因為聽經的時候，心不能起分別。比如，一人出聲誦經，另一人在旁邊攝心諦聽，字字句句，力圖聽得清楚分明。聽經的人心神專注，不敢向外攀緣一切聲色。倘若稍微打岔，聽到的內容就有脫漏，文義不能貫通。誦經的人有經文可看，即使心不能十分專注，也能誦得清楚；而聽經的人依靠音聲，一旦分心，便不能連貫起來。認真聽經的功德與恭敬誦經的人相等；倘若誦經者缺乏恭敬，他的功德就比不上聽經的人。 ❀

name of Amitabha as our principal practice, and read the Sutras as supporting practice. The Mahayana Sutras — such as the *Lotus Sutra*, *Shurangama Sutra*, *Nirvana Sutra*, *Diamond Sutra*, and *Complete Enlightenment Sutra* — can be recited regularly, either by picking only one or rotating among them.

In response to these teachings, Upasaka Zhou Meng You inquired if reciting each word with respect, correctness and clarity is enough to fulfil the instructions of “not pondering.” He further stated he often worried that the non-pondering and non-discriminating way of reciting might not yield actual understanding and Dharma-joy. Moreover, he recounted that whenever he recited the *Amitabha Sutra* or *The Practices and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Chapter*, he often thought about the beauty of the Land of Ultimate Bliss and the compassion of Samantabhadra, leading to great Dharma-joy in himself. However, he also worried that what he was doing constituted attachments and wandering thoughts.

The Master replied that for the sutra passages that are obvious in meaning, as long as we recite clearly, and refrain from intentionally analysing or pondering, then that is fine. It is not necessary for us to suppress any obvious understandings.

Upasaka Zhou then brought up another example, “I once saw a Dharma Master who recited the Lotus Sutra but did not understand the meaning. The joyful face he displayed when reciting could not be described by words. From this, I can understand that Dharma-joy is unrelated to knowing the meaning or understanding. Only by reciting without duality, and with persistence, compassion and respect will tangible benefits arise naturally and Dharma-joy be experienced.”

Upasaka Zhou further expressed that he would strive to always recite Sutras in such a manner from now on, and dedicate the merits to Bodhi. The Master then told him that the Ancients also prioritized hearing the Sutras being recited without pondering or thinking. For instance, when one person recites, another could carefully listen to each single word with unbroken focus. As the listener is concentrated, his senses will exclude everything else lest his concentration is disrupted and he can miss some of the sutra texts. As the reciter has a copy of the Sutra, even if he is not completely attentive, he could still recite clearly. However, the listener relies solely on each input of sound, thus, any break in focus will be disruptive. To listen to recitations attentively yields as much merit as respectfully reciting the Sutras. Moreover, if the reciter lacks reverence, his merit becomes inferior to that of the listener. ❀